



**THE URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY
OF THE CITY OF TWIN FALLS**

MEETING MINUTES

February 9, 2015

The Urban Renewal Agency held its regular monthly meeting at 12:00 p.m. this date in the Twin Falls City Council Chambers located at 305 3rd Avenue East, Twin Falls, Idaho.

Present:

Leon Smith URA Chairman
Dan Brizee URA Vice Chairman
Perri Gardner URA Member
Sarah Taylor URA Member
Bob Richards URA Member

Absent:

Dexter Ball URA Secretary
Neil Christensen URA Member

Also present:

Melinda Anderson Urban Renewal Executive Director
Jesse Schuerman Urban Renewal Engineer
Mitch Humble Deputy City Manager
Greg Lanting City Council Liaison to URA
Lorrie Bauer Economic Dev. Admin Assistant
Mandi Roberts Otak, Inc.
Gary Haderlie JUB Engineers
Suzanne Hawkins City Council
Chris Talkington City Council
Jackie Fields City Engineer

Agenda Item 1 – Call meeting to order.

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Consent Agenda: a) Review and approval of minutes from the January 12, 2015 regular meeting, and b) Review and approval of February 2015 payables.

Board member Sarah Taylor asked for information regarding the Legislative Fund. Melinda Anderson responded the TFURA budgeted \$10,000 to Redevelopment Association of Idaho (RAI) to help pay for legal assistance regarding new legislation. She noted that there are four bills currently in the legislature.

Bob Richards moved to accept the consent agenda as submitted and Perri Gardner seconded the motion. A roll call vote showed that all board members present voted in favor of the motion.

Agenda Item 3 – Update from Otak on the Main Avenue Design Project – Mandi Roberts.

Melinda reminded the Board that City Council members were invited to attend this meeting to become familiar with the progress of the Main Avenue Project. Chairman Smith welcomed those who attended and invited their questions and comments.

Mandi Roberts began the presentation making sure everyone understood what she was going to present was conceptual; they were ideas and options that need further investigation and discussion. Preliminary design is scheduled to be completed by the end of May which will define the project. Currently, the project is in Stage 3, planning and concepts, which is discussing options and ideas for the streetscape and street improvements.

One main issue is how the 2nd Avenues have become a pedestrian and traffic barrier over the years. A meeting is scheduled with ITD to discuss ideas and options to make the downtown a walkable district with intersections that are safe and easy to cross with better lighting, paving, and better access to parking areas, alleyways, and side streets to Main Avenue.

At the end of the preliminary design, Otak will present planning & design recommendations, and a preliminary design that could move forward to final design and construction. In regards to the full downtown plaza, recommendations for circulation, parking, wayfinding, gateways, etc. will be offered. They will be long term master plan type recommendations that could get implemented with the Phase 1 construction project or at a later time. The Main Avenue corridor will have more detailed recommendations for design.

Using projections, Mandi displayed what the project would include: 1) utility replacements in both the northerly and southerly alleyways that will extend beyond Fairfield and Jerome to tie in with existing utilities underground; 2) Main Avenue improvements to enhance the streetscape to include new paving, sidewalks, streetscape furnishings, trees, landscape, and signing between Fairfield and Jerome; 3) enhancing the connecting Hansen and Shoshone street corridors by tying them into the Main Avenue improvements, 4) a public space (likely the Rogerson site), 5) festival streets that could be closed off during public events; and other cross corridors could be enhanced. Mandi shared pictures of other communities who use a public space with festival streets and explained the functionality of each design.

Back-in angled parking benefits were explained and discussed. The main benefit is that when you exit the parking space, you have direct view of on-coming traffic. More care is needed at the beginning of the parking sequence than at the end which will be a disadvantage to begin with as people learn the process. Otak has a way to design the parking so it can be striped for back-in angled or the regular angled parking.

More curb extensions/bulbs would be beneficial if installed more liberally within the five block project area and along the second avenues. This would reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and also improve visibility between pedestrians and on-coming traffic. Curb extensions seem to better define on-street parking areas as well. Raised intersections have also been suggested because they help to slow traffic speed and encourage motorists to yield to pedestrians at crosswalks.

The community has shown a large interest in keeping the parking about the same, but adding more spaces where possible and also keeping the sidewalk widths, café space, and public space like they are now. There has also been a lot of interest in opening Hansen Street as a through street to help take some traffic off of Shoshone.

Mandi then shared some key streetscape elements and recommendations of the Project Advisory Committee which include keeping the green light poles with possible modifications, removing the planters, having benches, bike racks, bollards, and trash receptacles.

In regards to gateways and wayfinding, the community has a large interest in an arch with a unique design to bring more attention to Main Avenue. In regards to location, it was recommended to be on Shoshone St. where banners are hung today. Kiosks need to be replaced with a more functional design for community purposes. They should match the streetscape signing and be easy to read.

Mandi shared a list of items that they will need to have a consensus for at the March meeting in order to be included in the preliminary design: 1) Rogerson site as a signature public plaza, 2) some segments of festival streets and raised intersections, 3) open Hansen Street to traffic, 4) back-in angled parking, 5) about as much parking on Main as there is now, and 6) an arch as a signature identifying feature.

Mandi encouraged everyone to attend the workshop February 19th where they will share ideas, concepts, and options and welcome discussions for the downtown public space, parking, and all other issues for this project. Illustrations and examples will be presented as well. After feedback is gathered from the workshop and the Project Advisory Committee, the next task will be to layout the design.

Melinda noted that at the end of the Project Advisory Committee meeting this morning, the committee complimented Mandi on the great job her and her team has done. They're coming up with great concepts and getting people involved in the design process.

Dan Brizee asked how much sidewalk space there would be between Idaho Youth Ranch and Brown's if Hansen Street was opened up between them. Mandi replied that the street width is the same as between the Rogerson and Banner buildings, at least 8-10'. Dan then asked if consideration could be made to make one wider than the other to allow for better traffic. Mandi replied that as they've been looking at the options for the Rogerson site, putting on-street parking adjacent to the plaza could be problematic, so they are considering not having on-street parking at the "L" of Hansen & Main where the plaza is. Dan then asked if there could be no parking on the next section to the south to allow for a wider walkway, and Mandi agrees that would be a good idea and will look into it.

Melinda also asked the City Council members if they had any questions or comments. City Council member Chris Talkington shared that in his recent discussions with some Main Avenue businesses people, they are enthused that the water and sewer will stay in the alley as a way to keep their costs as low as possible.

Chairman Smith asked Mandi what events were planned for Thursday, February 19th, at the community workshop. She replied that Otak will be giving a presentation using drawings of ideas then divide everyone into groups so people can look at the drawings in more detail and offer their input. The workshop is open to the public and the public is encouraged to attend so they can understand what we're working with and provide their feedback. In addition to the community workshop, Otak will be meeting with different stakeholder groups throughout the week. There are three meeting sessions open to any business, merchant, and property owner of downtown. Notices and postcards have been sent via email to all downtown businesses. There are also meetings scheduled with other community groups to get as much input as possible.

Agenda Item 4 – Public input and/or items from the Urban Renewal Agency Board.

Board member Sarah Taylor asked for an update on the budget and if any other projects would be attempted this year. Melinda responded that there would need to be a clear understanding about the costs for Main Avenue before any other projects were started in downtown or old town. The Main Avenue project needs to be done correctly and be a success. The preliminary budget numbers for the project are expected by the end of May. That will indicate what amount of money is remaining for other projects. At this time there is no construction planned for downtown this year. By the end of this year, the design is expected to be completed. It will then go out for construction bids so the project construction can begin early spring of 2016. The Albion sewer project is important to get done and the other projects were dependent upon the need for additional water/sewer capacity but that need does not exist at this time.

Agenda Item 5 – Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

Next regular scheduled Urban Renewal meeting is Monday, March 9, 2015 at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie Bauer
Administrative Assistant